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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

Letter dated 26 April 2011 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Cuba to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to address you regarding the observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the disaster at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.

Because of its scope and complexity, the consequences of this grave catastrophe included persistent effects on the lives and health of the population, especially the children, of the affected areas in Ukraine, Belarus, the Russian Federation and other countries.

In response to the request for international aid, Cuban specialists visited Ukraine in early 1990 in order to evaluate the type of aid that could be offered. On 29 March of that year the first 139 children affected by the disaster arrived in Cuba to receive medical treatment.

At that time, a massive free health-care programme was begun to provide treatment in Cuba for children affected by the Chernobyl accident.

As part of this 21-year-old humanitarian programme, 25,392 persons from various countries have been treated in Cuba, including 21,340 children, most of them Ukrainian. Over 300 children have had surgery in our country.

In addition to the humanitarian aspect, which is undoubtedly the main one, the programme has also had a major scientific impact through the collection of important data on internal contamination in children from areas affected by the accident. This information has been disseminated at relevant scientific conferences and has been used by United Nations agencies like the International Atomic Energy Agency and the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation.



Cuba is not offering its surplus; it is sharing what it has. The programme to provide care for children affected by the Chernobyl catastrophe is one more example of our internationalist humanitarian policy.

I would be grateful if you could circulate this letter as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 69 (c).

(Signed) Rodolfo Benítez Versón
Ambassador
Chargé d'affaires a.i.